

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRIDGE 01555 162233Z

54

ACTION IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1282

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 1555

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UNGA, KS,KN,US,BB

SUBJ: NORTH KOREAN STATEMENT CHARGING US WAR PREPARATIONS

REF: STATE 198469

1. THIS MORNING (AUGUST 16), BY APPOINTMENT, I CALLED ON A.W. SYMMONDS, PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, TO DISCUSS KOREA, WITH REFERENCE TO BOTH THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH OF JULY 22 AND SUBJECT STATEMENT, AS WELL AS THE STATUS OF OAS CHARTER REFORM (SEE BRIDGETOWN 1556 FOR REPORT ON DISCUSSION OF LATTER). IN MAKING MY PRESENTATION, I CONTRASTED THE POSITIVE CHARACTER OF THE SECRETARY'S PROPOSALS WITH THE NEGATIVE CHARACTER OF THE NORTH KOREAN STATEMENT AND MADE THE POINTS OUTLINED IN PARA 12 OF REFTEL, ESPECIALLY OUR HOPE THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO AVOID A STERILE CONFRONTATION IN THE UNGA.

2. IN REPLY, SYMMONDS SAID THAT HE HAD SEEN NEITHER THE NORTH KOREAN STATEMENT NOR THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH (WE HAD SENT A COPY OF THE SPEECH TO THE MINISTRY, BUT SYMMONDS WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY AT THE TIME; ANOTHER HAS JUST BEEN SENT HIM). IF THE
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PAGE 02 BRIDGE 01555 162233Z

QUESTION SHOULD COME UP IN THE UNGA, BARBADOS' POSITION WOULD

BE THE SAME AS IT WAS LAST YEAR. WHILE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE WAS PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF BARBADIAN FOREIGN POLICY, AND THE GOB WOULD CERTAINLY SUPPORT ANY PROPOSALS THAT WOULD EFFECTIVELY LEAD TO PEACE IN KOREA, THE GOB WOULD RESERVE ITS POSITION WITH RESPECT TO "MANEUVERING" BY ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER.

3. I OBSERVED THAT WE WERE NOT "MANEUVERING" BUT, RATHER, PUTTING FORTH CONCRETE PROPOSALS THAT, IF ACCEPTED, COULD WELL RESOLVE THE KOREAN PROBLEM AND SECURE PEACE IN THE AREA. SYMONDS, HOWEVER, REMAINED UNCONVINCED. HE HAD NO DOUBT, HE SAID, THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO WITHDRAW OUR TROOPS FROM KOREA AND ACCEPTED OUR PROPOSALS AS BEING MADE IN GOOD FAITH BUT HE THOUGHT THE ROK WAS NO MORE INCLINED THAN NORTH KOREA TO YIELD THE CONCESSIONS REQUIRED TO BRING ABOUT PEACE AND, SUCH BEING THE CASE, HE COULD NOT VIEW THE PROPOSALS WE HAD MADE AS LIKELY TO LEAD TO CONCRETE RESULTS.

4. COMMENT: IT IS JUST POSSIBLE THAT THE VIEWS STATED BY SYMONDS ARE ONLY HIS OWN. IF, AS WE THINK MUCH MORE LIKELY, THEY ARE GOB'S, THERE HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN SOME SLIPPAGE IN GOB'S SUPPORT FOR US POSITION SINCE LAST UNGA. THE UNCERTAIN OUTCOME OF THE IMMINENT GENERAL ELECTION IN BARBADOS SUGGESTS THAT, IN ANY EVENT, THE GOB'S POSITION TODAY MAY WELL BE DIFFERENT FROM THE GOB'S POSITION WHEN THE UNGA CONVENES. END COMMENT.
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